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Unit 1 Paper 1 English 110 Literacy Narrative ▼

I might not be a good storyteller, but I would love to narrate about my literacy journey. My literacy narrative has a lot in common with Chimamanda Ngozi's experiences as a writer and a reader. I grew up in a middle-class family giving me an opportunity to have access to reading materials from an early age. My father was a teacher and my mother a businessperson. Most of my father's books were mathematics related having been a mathematics teacher. I grew up assuming that learning has nothing more than mathematics in it as my mother also treasured accounting which was vital for her business operations. Basically, what was available for me to read and write about at my tender age was mathematics-related just as Chimamanda's case as supported by her quote "I read American and British and American book and was also an early writer and wrote about what I was reading, and all my characters were white" (00:24-51). However, my attitude towards reading and writing changed when I joined school and learnt that I was a victim of a single story towards literacy as it had more than mathematics in it.

In her Ted talk, Chimamanda confirmed her changed attitude towards literature through her discovery of African books citing that "Things changed when I discovered African books" (2:05-07) giving her another side of story contrary to her assumed perception of whites and British as the major literature characters bearers. Just as this author, my attitude towards reading


and writing changed when I discovered other interesting subjects at school and their detachment with mathematics. English has been my favorite, and it has really helped understand my potentials as a writer and a reader. I believe that I am doing great as a reader as can employ the basics in reading online materials like avoiding distractions, setting time limit as well as making notes for summary purposes while engaging with a text. As a writer, I believe that I have experienced a positive milestone in my writing as am able to follow the stipulated guidelines ranging from grammar to preferred formats. Although my early learning was glued on maths, it did not stop me from exploring literature to understand what more it had to offer. However, it proved a challenge to change my childhood perception that my parents had instilled in me towards reading and writing as I had already started believing that learning had nothing more than calculations in all aspects of life. It was a stereotype that was shaped by my single story about learning exposing me to challenges with languages and arts at school which had nothing to do with calculation. Although I delayed in understanding these subjects, I finally managed to overcome my calculating aspect through engagements with teachers and trainers.

I remember one learning session when my teacher asked me to stand and make an English sentence using the word substitute. It was really a shame as I could not connect or comprehend anything substantial with such a word as I thought of it from a math's perspective. It took me a while to even figure out what I could talk about with such a word only for my friend to stand up and say, "soya milk is used as a substitute for daily milk". Since that day I decided to make literature books my friend and thanks to my exploration in such texts that I can make meaningful English sentences and even write a narrative using this language. I have also encountered writing problems at school ranging from grammar, interpretation of instructions and following the right format. It has not been easy as time waits for no man so when given a certain

deadline, finishing up assignments without clarity and full understanding of what the assignments demands has hindered my writing in most instances, but I continue to learn for perfection.

Since my parents' introduction to mathematics and calculations shaped my initial perception towards learning as well as the aspect of my mother tongue, learning a second language and being bilingual proved a challenge for me. You can imagine my mind as a mathematician whose knowledge is grounded on a parental approach thus using the best language "mother tongue" to make me understand. Changing such a mind with introduction of other subjects and instilling a second language can be a serious challenge to the target. To this effect I have fallen time and again in my speech, in my writing and reading. However, being unable to express myself so well, or failing in my grammar has not stopped me from exploring my potentials as a writer and a reader. On the contrary, such challenges have made me remain focused in research to understand how best I can shape my future through literacy. My teachers and mentors have helped me greatly in shaping my positive attitude towards literacy. I am no longer the person whose mind only thought of calculations but rather a person whose mind has embraced a diverse perception towards literacy as liberation. I feel the need to continue exploring my literacy potentials through research and following my instructor's guideline to become the best writer or reader the universe can offer.

Works Cited

 https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story